

R E M A R K S

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

THE CLAIMS

Claim 6 has been amended to overcome rejection under 35 USC 101. As suggested by the Examiner, claim 6 has been amended to recite that the method of the present invention is operable via a computer.

In addition, claim 6 has been amended to clarify the feature of the method of the present invention whereby a manufacturing process for a particular product having a desired combination of values of individual attributes of use is dynamically derived by arranging in a prescribed sequence respective corresponding manufacturing series activities for achieving the desired values of the individual attributes of use.

Still further, claim 6 has been amended at line 7 to correct a minor clerical error.

No new matter has been added, and it is respectfully requested that the amendments to claim 6 be approved and entered and that the rejection under 35 USC 101 be withdrawn.

THE PRIOR ART REJECTION

Claims 2-4, 6, 8 and 9 were again rejected under 35 USC 102 as being anticipated by USP 6,189,980 ("Costanza"). This rejection, however, is again respectfully traversed.

As explained in detail in the Amendment under 37 CFR 1.116 filed February 26, 2003, the method of the claimed present invention provides a technique whereby the data required for a manufacturing process for producing a particular product is dynamically derived (generated) from a database storing only a template (i.e., generic structure) of the manufacturing data and its derivation rules. And as explained in detail in the Amendment under 37 CFR 1.116 filed February 26, 2003, with this method, the manufacturing process for producing the particular product can be derived as it is needed and the amount of data required to be maintained is kept to a minimum even as product specifications change to reflect changing market conditions.

By contrast, as explained in detail in the Amendment under 37 CFR 1.116 filed February 26, 2003, the conventional method requires that input items are configured and stored in a database for each particular product, so that when a variety of particular products having slight differences are to be manufactured there is an explosive increase in configuration information and the amount of data stored in the database.

In order to more clearly recite the distinguishing features of the method of the present invention, claim 6 has been amended as set forth hereinabove to clarify that the manufacturing process for a particular product having a desired combination of values of individual attributes of use is dynamically derived by arranging in a prescribed sequence respective corresponding manufacturing series activities for achieving the desired values of the individual attributes of use.

The operational features and advantageous effects of the present invention as well as the differences between the method of the present invention and the conventional method are described in detail in the Amendment under 37 CFR 1.116 filed February 26, 2003. And the Examiner is again referred to the arguments set forth in the Remarks of the Amendment under 37 CFR 1.116 filed February 26, 2003.

With respect to the Costanza reference, on page 3 of the Office Action the Examiner again asserts that Costanza discloses "defining a series product comprising a family of products having a collection of attributes of use or features in a database" and "defining each product contained in the series product." In addition, the Examiner asserts that Costanza shows defining each product "by a specific collection of attributes of use and mapping those values to process steps 15 since the product definition is for defining a product of, for example, a certain

diameter, and not simply for defining a product based on what processes are available independent of the desired outcome."

It is respectfully submitted, however, that Costanza in fact requires that each product be defined in terms of the process required to manufacture that particular product. And it is also respectfully submitted that Costanza requires that each product and each process be individually input and stored in a database. In this connection, it is respectfully pointed out that in Costanza the products are grouped into families by process only once each product and process are stored. (See Fig. 2 of Costanza in which step 15 of defining products and step 50 of defining processes must be performed before step 100, product synchronization, and see also the corresponding disclosure in Costanza at column 8, line 50 to column 9, line 19.)

It is respectfully submitted that Costanza merely discloses a method of balancing resources in a manufacturing process using a database similar to those disclosed in the Background of the Invention section of the present application. For example, in Costanza, "each product in the family of products that is to be manufactured by the manufacturing line is defined and stored as data" (see column 8, lines 57-59). In addition, Costanza requires that the tasks required for each process and the individual work time for each task by product be inputted and stored in the database when defining a process (see column 9, lines 12-14).

By contrast, according to the method of the claimed present invention, it is unnecessary to input every combination of the processes for manufacturing each particular product, as is necessary in Costanza. Instead, the method of the claimed present invention makes possible to dynamically derive (rather than input) a process for the production of a particular product simply by arranging in a prescribed sequence already defined manufacturing series activities for achieving desired values of individual attributes of use.

And it is respectfully submitted that Costanza clearly does not at disclose, teach or suggest the feature of the present invention as recited in amended claim 6 whereby the manufacturing process for a particular product having a desired combination of values of individual attributes of use is dynamically derived by arranging in a prescribed sequence respective corresponding manufacturing series activities for achieving the desired values of the individual attributes of use.

It is respectfully submitted, therefore, that amended independent claim 6, and claims 2-4, 8 and 9 depending therefrom, now clearly patentably distinguishes over Costanza under 35 USC 102 as well as under 35 USC 103.

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Application No. 09/448,055
Response to Office Action


Customer No. 01933



In view of the foregoing, entry of this Amendment, allowance of the claims and the passing of this application to issue are respectfully solicited.

If the Examiner has any comments, questions, objections or recommendations, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the telephone number given below for prompt action.

Respectfully submitted,


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